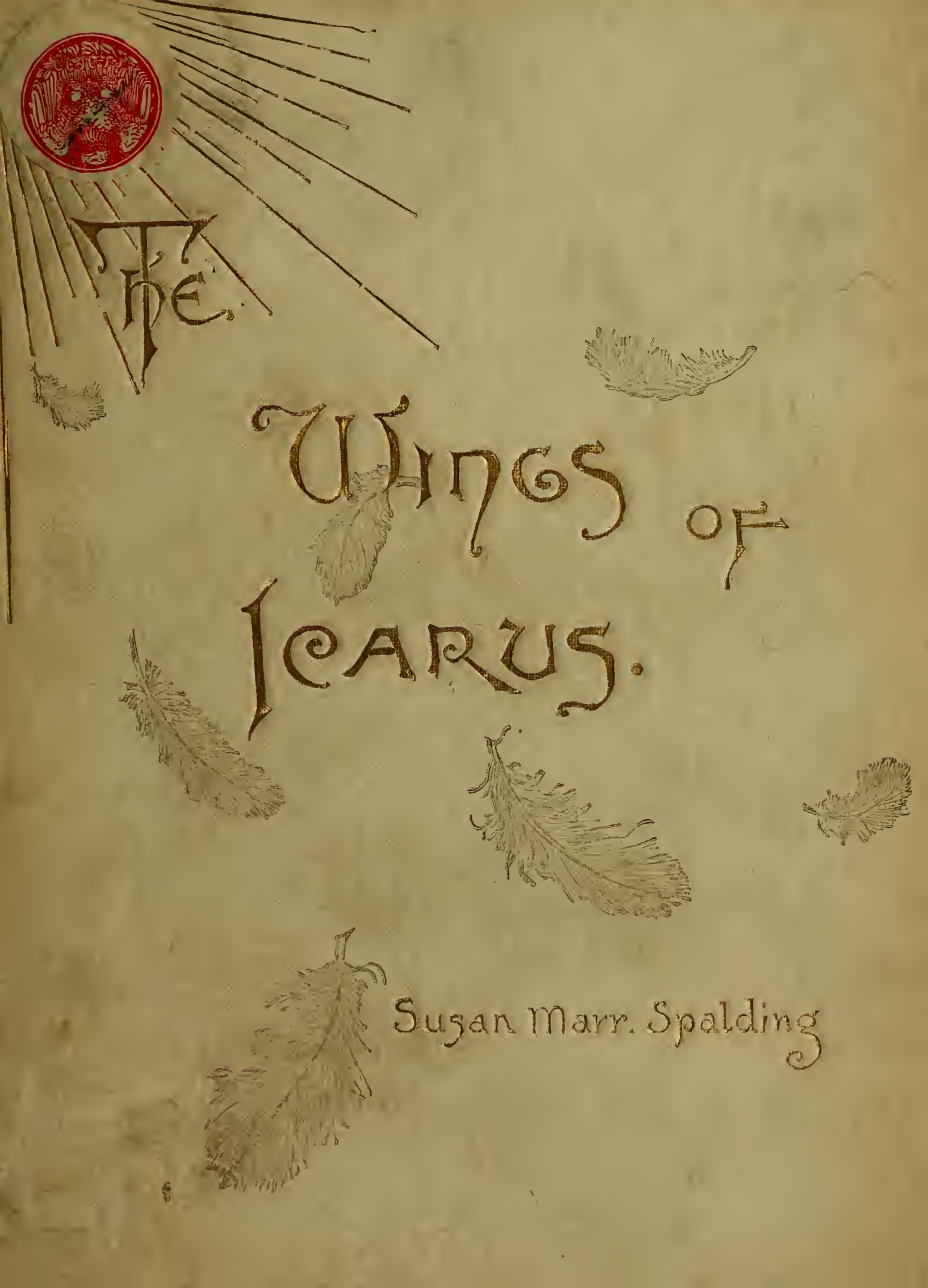
The
Wings of
Icarus.
Susan Marr. Spalding

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS.
PS 2894
Chap. Copyright No.
Shelf .S33
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

THE
WINGS OF ICARUS

THE

WINGS OF ICARUS

BY

SUSAN MARR SPALDING

BOSTON
ROBERTS BROTHERS
1892

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
COPYRIGHT
APR 19 1892
WASHINGTON.
12936

PS2894
.S33

Copyright, 1892,
By Roberts Brothers.

University Press:
John Wilson and Son, Cambridge, U.S.A.

To HENRY D. NELL,

In recognition of an unfailing friendship,

This Volume

IS GRATEFULLY DEDICATED.

CONTENTS.

	Page
The Wings of Icarus	11
Two Singers	12
A Desire	13
Fate	14
Equinoctial	16
Désillusionné	17
The Second Place	18
Dear Hands	20
A Mirror	21
Influence	22
After the Fall	23
Au Roi	24
A Victory	25
Psyche's Lamp	26
An Antique Intaglio, I.	27
An Antique Intaglio, II.	28
Guerdon	29

PAGE

Death's First Lesson 31
Vantage-Ground 32
Second Bloom 33
Two Lives 34
Out of Silence 35
Two Guests 36
By Love-Light 37
The Sea's Spell 38
Byways 39
Vashti 40
Potiphar's Wife 41
Love's Gift 42
To My Host 43
My Brother's Keeper 44
A Confession 45
The Singers 46
When He Comes 47
Bounty 48
One of Many 49
A Song's Worth 50
Quest 51
Hail 52
At Friends' Meeting 53
Caprice 54
Storm Signals 55
My Service 56

PAGE

In April 57
The Prairie 58
My Familiar 59
Love's Largess 60
A Winter Gift 62
A Battle-Ground 63
When We Have Said Farewell 64
Companionship 65
A Portrait 66
Sparrow and Skylark 67
Song of the Stars 68
Philip Bourke Marston 70
Immortelles 71
Dawn 72
Doubt 73
A Forsaken Garden 74
The Wave's Death 75
East Wind 76
One Voice 77
A Lesson in Horticulture 78
In Winter 80
Sorrow and Song 81
An Old Fan 82
A Flood 84
An Enigma 85
After-Possession 87

PAGE

A Fancy 88
The Lighted Way 90
An Aspiration 91
My Part 92
A Lesson of Love 93
"From Life's Levels" 95
Our Daily Bread 96
God's Own 98
Hell Gate 100
A Lost Spring 101
A Winter Rose 103
Love's Presence 105
My Friend 107
The Fringed Gentian 109
From the Phonograph 110
Quatrains 111

THE WINGS OF ICARUS.

THE WINGS OF ICARUS.

HE flew too near the sun, and evermore
His futile wings in mockery we name.
A type of fallen vanity became
The torn and scattered pinions that he wore.
Ah, is it wiser all the dull earth o'er
To crawl, unlured by heights of love or fame?
Nay, though our souls be wax unto the flame
Of Destiny, *he that hath wings, must soar!*
Like Icarus, I deemed my pinions strong
To bear me to the heaven of my desire;
Like him, from skies too glowing, I am hurled.
Now, for a day, these broken plumes of song,
Faded and scorched by love's divinest fire,
The winds of Fate shall blow about the world.

TWO SINGERS.

SOMETIMES, dear Love, you murmur, "Oh, could I
But snare with words the thoughts that flutter through
The thickets of my heart! Could I, like you,
Bind with sweet speech the moods of earth and sky;
Or turn to song a smile, a tear, a sigh!
Alas! my springs of thought but serve to do
The mill-stream's common work. I may but view
Afar, the heights of song to which you fly."
For me, I shape from all my heart's best gold
These skill-less cups of verse. They have, I know,
No grace save this, — unto your lips they hold
Love's dearest draught. I hear your praise, but, lo!
One smile of yours, one kiss all-eloquent,
Shames my poor songs to silence. Be content!

A DESIRE.

LET me not lay the lightest feather's weight
Of duty upon Love. Let not, my own,
The breath of one reluctant kiss be blown
Between our hearts. I would not be the gate
That bars, like some inexorable fate,
The portals of thy life; that says, "Alone
Through me, shall any joy to thee be known;"
Rather the window, fragrant early and late
With thy sweet clinging thoughts, that grow and twine
Around me like some bright and blooming vine;
Through which the sun shall shed his wealth on thee
In golden showers; through which thou mayst look out,
Exulting in all beauty, without doubt
Or fear, or shadow of regret from me.

FATE.

TWO shall be born the whole wide world apart,
And speak in different tongues, and have no thought
Each of the other's being, and no heed ;
And these, o'er unknown seas to unknown lands
Shall cross, escaping wreck, defying death,
And all unconsciously shape every act
And bend each wandering step to this one end, —
That, one day, out of darkness, they shall meet
And read life's meaning in each other's eyes.

And two shall walk some narrow way of life
So nearly side by side, that should one turn
Ever so little space to left or right
They needs must stand acknowledged face to face.
And yet, with wistful eyes that never meet,

With groping hands that never clasp, and lips
Calling in vain to ears that never hear,
They seek each other all their weary days
And die unsatisfied — and this is Fate !

EQUINOCTIAL.

I SAID, "September days are clear and fair,
And sweet with scents of ripening fruits, and free
From the fierce heats that sweep across the sea
And break in tempests on the summer air.
For one storm-beaten life, blown here and there
By summer gusts of passion, there will be
A short, sweet season of serenity, —
A refuge pain and peril may not share."
How should I know that one September blast
Would out-wreck all the tempests of the year ?
O treacherous heart, smiling at dangers past,
So wilfully secure, how should I fear
That all thy vaunted strength could not avail
Against one passionate autumnal gale ?

DÉSILLUSIONNÉ.

THE foolish bud would fain become a flower,
And flaunt its heart out in the fair sunshine;
The ardent blossom, tremulous on its vine,
Dreams only of a golden fruitful hour;
Amber and amethyst, of royal dower,
The perfect, purple clusters hang, and pine
To pour their souls forth into perfumed wine, —
Impatient, leaning from their sheltered bower.
O blind ones! All your blended stores of scent
And subtle sweets to this poor end are spent, —
That man should idly quaff from sparkling glass,
Your dew and fire and spice; sighing, while e'er
Your honey lingers on his lips, "Alas!
The bud, the bloom, the fruit! *How sweet they were!*"

THE SECOND PLACE.

UNTO my loved ones have I given all:
The tireless service of my willing hands,
The strength of swift feet running to their call,
Each pulse of this fond heart whose love commands
The busy brain unto their use; each grace,
Each gift, the flower and fruit of life. To me
They give, with gracious hearts and tenderly,
The second place.

Such joy as my glad service may dispense
They spend to make some brighter life more blest;
The grief that comes, despite my frail defence,
They seek to soothe upon a dearer breast.
Love veils his deepest glories from my face;
I dimly dream how fair the light may be
Beyond the shade, where I hold, longingly,
The second place.

And yet, 't is sweet to know, that though I make
No soul's supremest bliss, no life shall lie
Ruined and desolated for my sake,
Nor any heart be broken when I die.
And sweet it is to see my little space
Grow wider hour by hour; and gratefully
I thank the tender fate that granteth me
The second place.

DEAR HANDS.

ROUGHENED and worn with ceaseless toil and care,
No perfumed grace, no dainty skill, had these;
They earned for whiter hands a jewelled ease,
And kept the scars unlovely for their share.
Patient and slow, they had the will to bear
The whole world's burdens, but no power to seize
The flying joys of life, the gifts that please,
The gold and gems that others find so fair.
Dear hands, where bridal jewel never shone,
Whereon no lover's kiss was ever pressed,
Crossed in unwonted quiet on the breast, —
I see, through tears, your glory newly won;
The golden circlet of life's work well done,
Set with the shining pearl of perfect rest.

A MIRROR.

THOU art a mountain, stately and serene,
Rising majestic o'er each earthly thing,
And I a lake that round thy feet doth cling,
Kissing thy garment's hem, unknown, unseen.
I tremble when the tempests darkly screen
Thy face from mine. I smile when sunbeams fling
Their bright arms round thee. When the blue heavens lean
Upon thy breast, I thrill with bliss, O King!
Thou canst not stoop; we are too far apart.
I may not climb to reach thy mighty heart;
Low at thy feet I am content to be.
But wouldst thou know how great indeed thou art,
Bend thy proud head, my mountain love, and see
How all thy glories shine again in me!

INFLUENCE.

LIKE dying echo, faint and far it seems,
Or fleeting fragrance born of summer rain;
Elusive as a half-heard, haunting strain,
Or some dim memory interwove with dreams.
It wields no power o'er outward things, nor gleams
A shining goal for Hope or Love to gain;
It cannot ward the blows of grief or pain,
Nor smooth fate's stormy flood to peaceful streams.
Yet nameless, vague, it hath a life intense,
That thrills through every heart-throb, every breath;
Whate'er I am, whate'er I hope to be,
Is won from this sweet, subtle influence,
This soul-lit flame, revealed alone to me,
That lights my life, and will illumine death.

AFTER THE FALL.

O PERFECT fruit! Thy purple wine of bliss
Through all my being thrills in ecstasy,
The while I gather from forbidden tree
The whole world's sweetness folded in one kiss!
With heart and eyes unsealed, I shall not miss
One breath of rapture I have won from thee,
Nor yet thy crimson bloom that crowneth me.
Ah, what were all the world worth, wanting this?
"*Whoso doth eat thereof shall surely die!*"
AMEN! I would not all too lightly buy
My treasure held so dear. This tremulous breath
Turns not the scale. I count it glorious gain
To purchase sweetest joy with bitterest pain,
My one glad hour of life and love, with death!

AU ROI.

GO, rose, and blush to radiance 'neath his eyes,
Even as I, who in his glance am blessed.
If thou a moment to his lips be pressed,
Cling close, O rose ; with rapturous kiss surprise
And snare for me the subtle bliss that flies
Before my longing lips. Perchance thou 'lt rest,
O happy rose, an hour upon his breast !
Glow then and throb, as 't were my heart that lies
Within thy crimson bloom. Haply, some new,
Sweet, sudden sense of joy may tremble through
His soul. As in a vision swift and bright
He may at last thy message read aright.
Then die, dear rose, as I would gladly do
To win for him one moment of delight.

A VICTORY.

FOR all life's joys my proud heart uttereth
No vain desire. For since I am denied
The one great bliss, I will have nought beside.
Yet I am fain to conquer life with death;
And so, O Love, when I am done with pride,
Come thou and kiss to stillness my last breath;
Let the last voice I hear be thine, that saith
"I love thee!" so shall I die satisfied.
Then, when on my dead face some sad eyes dwell,
Some loving hearts make bitter moan, and some,
More loving yet, smile, saying, "It is well!"
How will all marvel at the sweetness come
So strangely to my lips, not knowing this, —
It is the radiance left by thy last kiss!

PSYCHE'S LAMP.

HOW sad a task unto all womankind,
O sweet, suspicious Psyche, didst thou set!
For eyes too clear too oft with tears are wet,
And heart-aimed darts are happiest when they blind.
Ah, who like thee shall seek, and hope to find
In Love's dear place a god? And who hath yet
Too close his image scanned without regret? —
That poison plant amid the roses twined.
Better the midnight of illusive bliss!
Better to still the restless, wistful doubt,
That bids us rise and shiver in the damp,
Chill air, alert to spy Love's frailties out!
Better his voice, his clasp, his clinging kiss!
O Psyche, wherefore didst thou light thy lamp?

AN ANTIQUE INTAGLIO.

I.

GREAT cities that defied Time's power are dust,
And mighty temples ruins; yet this gem,
Seeming a fragile thing, outliveth them.
Its beauty bears no trace of Time's keen thrust;
Undimmed the marvellous lustre that doth trust
To none its secret; every delicate line
Glows with immortal freshness and divine,
That fears no ravage of decay or rust.
How infinite is art! A magic glass
This tiny, chiselled disk becomes to me;
Greece and her glories rise and shine and pass
Before my dazzled eyes, then fade to wan
And spectral shores, where the Ægean Sea
Guards the lone ruins of the Parthenon.

AN ANTIQUE INTAGLIO.

II.

SO infinitely small we scarce may trace
The magic touches of the graver's hand;
And yet so great that Time himself doth stand
With envious gaze, all powerless to efface.
Here lies the power and skill and wondrous grace
That might the stateliest palaces have planned;
And one soul's lifelong toil perchance is spanned
Within this little circle's narrow space.
Was he content, the artist? Did he burn
With ardent pride and sweet creative bliss
O'er thy perfected loveliness, nor yearn
For wider spheres and mightier work than this?
Or from thy beauty would he sadly turn,
And sigh, and gaze on the Acropolis?

GUERDON.

ONE said : " In all the world can nought compare
With this, my store of jewels. See them there :
Diamonds that shame the stars ; rubies whose blaze
Outflames the sunset ; opals whose weird rays
Are prisoned moonlight ; this great topaz globe
Of glory stolen from a Sun-god's robe.
But one pearl hast thou, — poor, as all may see,
Yet, lo, I lack it. *Give it unto me !* "

One said : " My palace domes in splendor rise ;
A hundred windows open to the skies ;
My halls with countless treasures are made bright,
And filled with sunshine, for I love the light.
Therefore it irks me in my revelling
To find one nook where still the shadows cling ;
Thy love's small lamp, though faint, methinks is clear,
And will suffice to light it. *Burn thou here !* "

One said: "My castle walls are grandly planned;
And though the earth should tremble, they shall stand.
And my great foe, whose armies throng the plain,
Shall hurl his might against them all in vain.
Yet, stay, one little breach I can descry,
That some too-daring enemy may try.
Thou art but frail, yet braver must I spare
For nobler, dearer service. *Stand thou there!*"

I gave my jewel up, and went my ways,
Smiling, but empty-handed, all my days.
I burnt my heart out to its last, faint spark,
And thenceforth dwelt in cold and dearth and dark.
I flung my body in the breach, and drew
The fiercest fire, and fell, pierced through and through
With the last darts sped by the flying foe.
And my reward? They who most love, best know!

DEATH'S FIRST LESSON.

THREE sad, strange things already death hath shown
To me who lived but yesterday. My love,
Who loved to kiss my hands and lips above
All other joys, — whose heart upon my own
So oft has throbbed, — fears me, now life has flown,
And shuddering turns away. The friend who strove
My trust to win, and all my faith did prove,
Sees, in my pale, still form, a bar o'erthrown
To some most dear desire. While one who spake
No fond and flattering word of love or praise,
Who only cold and stern reproof would give
To all my foolish, unconsidered ways, —
This one would glad have died that I might live;
This heart alone lies broken for my sake.

VANTAGE-GROUND.

WHO always can discern pale, sad defeat
From shining victory? Look where they rise, —
Those radiant mountains piercing the bright skies
That we two climbed with eager steps and fleet.
Midway I faltered, fell, and sought more sweet,
Less perilous scenes. He gained the heights, but lies
With mangled limbs and wide, unseeing eyes,
The world beneath, the clouds his winding-sheet.
I walk in safety my low, level land,
My golden harvests ripe on either hand;
Yet sometimes hath my soul in longing cried,
"Death hath no pain, life hath no joy denied,
If where he stood I might a moment stand,
And see the things that he saw ere he died."

SECOND BLOOM.

IN fruitage-time we do not look for flowers;
Yet we may see on some October day,
Allured by autumn's faithless sun and showers,
Beside the ripened fruit, the bloom of May.
It holds no hope of summer, glad and gay;
No pledge of future wealth its beauty dowers;
The first autumnal storm that darkly lowers
Shall sweep its sweet, untimely life away.
Oh, fair our toil-won, garnered harvests are,
And bright our teeming orchards' store of gold;
And sweet the clusters bending from our bowers,
That all their glories of fulfilment hold;
But fairer, sweeter, yea, and dearer far
The fruitless blossoms of our autumn hours.

TWO LIVES.

ONE, restless, changeful, ardent, as the sea;
One, peaceful as a sheltered mountain lake.
The same fierce storm, whose faintest voice can wake
The one to passionate grief or joy, will be
Unto the other but a breeze to make
Light ripples o'er its clear tranquillity.
One reaches to all shores, and would be free
On every fair and shining strand to break;
One nestles in its narrow bounds, and seems
Content to mirror its own hills and skies.
But still the sea's low moanings never cease;
Still the calm lake grows tremulous with dim dreams;
'Neath passion and repose vain longing lies.
One knows no ecstasy; one knows no peace!

OUT OF SILENCE.

IN wildernesses where no living thing
Hath ventured Nature's secrets to explore,
The seal of silence on each mystic door
She sets. Hushed are the soft winds' murmuring,
Voiceless the tempest, stilled the thunder's roar,
And echoless the hills; till life doth bring
The hearing ear, that, longing, listening,
The spell of silence breaks forevermore.
So in my heart each loving, tender thought
Lay mute and still, and knew nor voice nor tongue
Until thy presence filled my soul, and brought
Expression to my lips. Then sudden sprung
These songs to life, that but for thee were nought.
Hadst thou not listened, they had not been sung.

TWO GUESTS.

LOVE was ere while my guest, but did outstay
His welcome in my heart. Be it confessed
I wearied of his raptures, his unrest,
His smiles, his tears, his too capricious sway.
At last, with show of grief, Love went his way,
Leaving me free to bid a nobler guest.
Now is my dwelling garnished, swept, and dressed
With rarest bloom, for him who comes to-day.
Ah, what new worlds of joy we two shall trace!
What clear, calm realms of thought we shall explore!
Yet do I thrill beneath this first embrace
With the old bliss and pain I knew of yore.
Can this be he whose presence I forswore?
Can this be Love with a new voice and face?

BY LOVE-LIGHT.

I HID my dearest folly from all eyes,
But most from his, my fondest, wisest friend.
The frailty I could love but not defend,
I feared lest he should fathom and despise.
But when, one rarest hour 'neath evening skies,
Our Love her lamp to Confidence did lend,
E'en though it faintly flickered with his sighs,
Therewith he lit his whole heart to its end.
I smiled to see a dear and foolish thought
Enshrined within his soul's most secret place.
"Fear not," I cried, "to have thy folly shown;
No greater joy hath all thy wisdom wrought.
Now is thy love the measure of all grace,
Know, sweet, my friend, thy folly is my own!"

THE SEA'S SPELL.

BENEATH thy spell, O radiant summer sea, —
Lulled by thy voice, rocked on thy shining breast,
Fanned by thy soft breath, by thy touch caressed, —
Let all thy treacheries forgotten be.
Let me still dream the ships I gave to thee
All golden-freighted in fair harbors rest;
Let me believe each sparkling wave's white crest
Bears from thy depths my loved and lost to me.
Let me not heed thy wrecks, nor count thy slain.
As o'er-fond lovers for love's sake forget
Their dearest wrongs, so I, with eyes still wet
With thy salt tears, with heart still wrung with pain,
Back to thy fierce, sweet beauty turn again,
And though thou wreck me, will I love thee yet!

BYWAYS.

WALK, if thou wilt, thy life's broad highway, friend;
To some fair tower of fame perchance 't will lead,
Some shining dome of wealth. With eager speed
Pursue the path that all the world doth wend;
At least, thy road lies level to its end.
But, oh, the byways sweet thou dost not heed,
Straying through wood and glade and blooming mead,
In idle paths that nowhere seem to tend,
Save to a sweet surprise of vale or sea, —
A sudden, rapturous glimpse of heaven! All this,
I know, hath neither charm nor lure for thee;
Yet in these nameless ways there well may be
Some happy chance that thou wilt grieve to miss, —
Some golden gate of opportunity!

VASHTI.

NO queen, O Vashti, o'er the earth shall reign
With mightier rule than thine, whose royal crown
Was yielded up, — whose sceptre was laid down,
With all the power and glory in thy train, —
Lest one defiling glance should soil or stain
The beauty that blushed not to win renown,
That paled not at thy tyrant's fatal frown,
While courtiers plead, and flatterers fawned in vain.
Great queen, discrowned, supplanted, yet how wise !
For loveliness unseen of mortal eyes
Fades never, nor do guarded charms grow poor.
While the world swings, shall man remember thee ;
And Esther's blazoned beauty pale before
The light of thy imperial chastity.

POTIPHAR'S WIFE.

THE dazzling gems that shone in her attire,
Could 'neath her gleaming eyes no lustre claim;
Her beauty glowed about her like a flame,
Fed by the splendor of her passion's fire.
Snared in the fatal web of her desire,
A glittering serpent, writhing in her shame;
Her blood, like molten metal, went and came,
In the hot conflict of her love and ire.
At last her passion, fierce, insatiate,
Stifled with its own fury, dully slept.
As livid ashes gather slow, where late
The flames their glowing revelries have kept,
So, over burning brow and bosom, crept
The cold, gray pallor of her deadly hate!

LOVE'S GIFT.

I ASKED for bread; you gave, O Love, a stone.
I spurned it not, but while I starved, I wrought
Its dulness into light, until it caught
The radiance of the clearest star that shone.
So this poor pebble to a gem has grown,
And kings to wear it in their crowns have sought,
Counting to this their rarest pearls as nought;
And at your feet, dear Love, I lay your own.
Now, though I die of hunger, wanting bread,
Yet have I joy, knowing it will be said
By all men gazing on this peerless gem,
"Lo, Love's least gift, though given in careless scorn,
Outshines the fairest jewels that adorn
An Eastern monarch's royal diadem!

TO MY HOST.

AT life's great banquet long I sat and late,
Among the eager throng of guests the least.
I found no comfort in the clamorous feast,
No glory in the wearying pomp and state.
I drank of wealth, while yet my thirst increased;
I tasted fame, and wildly strove to sate
Desire in pleasure's cup, — O joyless fate!
But when the lights burned low, and music ceased,
And tired revellers departed slow,
One came whose smile my sad heart lifted up,
And poured, and pledged me in Love's golden cup.
I drank with rapturous wonder, crying, "Lo,
Though many guests have feasted here and passed,
Yet hast thou kept the good wine till the last!"

MY BROTHER'S KEEPER.

I CALLED him faint of heart, in spirit poor;
I said, "O brother, for all such as thee
The world is full of snares and subtlety!
How little art thou fitted to endure
The ills thy weakness brings! Let my strength be
Thy constant shield. My vision swift and sure
Shall pierce the darkest depths of every lure
About our paths. I 'll lead thee; lean on me!"
But when with subtlest art temptation wove
Round our unwary souls her fairest spell;
When lust of power and wealth, and love as well,
Their keenest shafts against dear Honor drove;
When in her cause I and my brother strove, —
Behold! he conquered grandly — but I fell!

A CONFESSION.

NO chain is stronger than its weakest link.
It is a truth we did not feel, I think,
When we our mighty love-ties forged, and cried,
"Nor earth nor heaven our souls can e'er divide!"

Now, worlds asunder, though in gloom we go,
And darkly hint at "cruel Fate," I know
The thing that really parted you and me
Was a light blow you dealt my vanity.

THE SINGERS.

ONE, blind, has taught how beauty should be sung;
One, deaf, all silence tuned to music sweet;
From one who wandered homeless in the street,
A rapturous, deathless song of home was wrung.
How many a pæan of victory has sprung
From pallid lips, grown nerveless with defeat!
How many empty hearts must sadly greet
Their own love-songs on happier lovers' tongue!
As some rare fabrics are in darkness wrought
Lest light should mar the dainty web, so, too,
The poet, with a golden thread of thought,
Weaves in the shade his fancies fine and true.
So from his sorrow is your pleasure brought,
The joy he hath not doth he give to you!

WHEN HE COMES.

I WOULD not have Love's presence every day
Dimmed with my dreary round of common care ;
I would not with too frequent use outwear
His dear delights, nor weight his wings with clay.
Nay, rather let him come as monarch may,
Unto some sacred festival and rare ;
Let me to greet him, house and heart prepare,
Setting my life in all its best array.
What though the days that darkly intervene
Are frozen wastes ! The shining heights enthrone
The sunset's glow, while, shivering unseen,
The low vales hide. Dear Memory's eyes, alone,
Count the bright hours whereon love's light hath shone,
Nor heed the darkness that doth lie between.

BOUNTY.

IT needs must be, from all thine harvests bright,
That I may glean one sheaf unmissed of thee;
And from thy cup that brims abundantly
Some drops may cool my thirsty lips aright.
It needs must be, that from thy life's great light
Some shining rays may fall aslant on me;
And these my food, and drink, and fire shall be,
Through winter's dearth and darkness, day and night.
Ah, if our angels keep the record true
Of all the unconscious good we haply do,
How will the page that thy bright name doth bless
With love's most precious radiance glow and shine!
Nor less the grace, nor less the gift divine
Because of thy serene unconsciousness.

ONE OF MANY.

"BE true to me." This ever is Love's plea.
And yet, "Be true to me," I do not say
To thee, my love, who loveth truth alway,
More, even, than love's supremest ecstasy.
For sweeter songs than mine are sung to thee;
And fairer lives, flower-like, unfold each day.
My bloom but helps to make the summer gay;
My voice but serves to swell life's harmony.
The channels of thy soul are deep and wide,
And fed from many springs. Ah, poor indeed
The shallow love that would deny thy due
To all sweet streams save its own narrow tide!
I know thy needs; and so I do not plead
As one who loveth less, "To me be true."

A SONG'S WORTH.

I MADE a song for my dear love's delight;
I wrought with all sweet words my heart could lend
To longing lips, and thrilled with joy to send
The message only love could read aright.
He came; and while I trembled in his sight,
He kissed my hands and said, "To what sweet end,
Unknowing, hast thou wrought, O gentle friend?
Singing thy song, I learned to woo, despite
My loved one's frown; and now she is my own."
Blessing me then, he went his happy way.
The whole world sings my song, and I alone
Am silent; yet through tears I sometimes say,
"To which of us doth greater joy belong?
He hath his love; but I, — I have my song."

QUEST.

AS one who tireless seeks, night after night,
Some far-off, nebulous star that doth elude
The eye of science, — noting every mood
Of changing skies, and deeming every bright
Resplendent orb but meant to guide his sight
To that dim, distant ray, — so do I brood
Upon thy far, faint thoughts, whose solitude
I may not break ; so by my love's great light
Would I thy subtle, fleeting fancies gain,
More than the shining thoughts thou dost not hide.
Ah me ! The student shall attain his goal ;
But I thy lightest mood shall seek in vain ;
For all God's universe is not so wide
As the eternal boundaries of thy soul !

HAIL.

I MEANT to fall, a soft, sweet, summer shower,
With tender touch upon the fainting earth,
Redeeming field and hill from drought and dearth,
A gift of life to every leaf and flower.

One icy blast froze all my love to hate,
And changed me from a blessing to a blight.
Behold dead harvests, and young leaves in flight,
Bare, fruitless vines, and rose-bowers desolate!

O winds of Fate! O'er all the universe
Though ye blow swift or slow, for good or ill;
No sadder task the gods shall bid you fill,
Than this, — that turns love's blessing to a curse.

AT FRIENDS' MEETING.

SUNSHINE and shadow o'er unsculptured walls
Hang tremulous curtains, radiant and fair;
The breath of Summer perfumes all the air;
Afar the wood-bird trills its tender calls.
More eloquent than chanted rituals,
Subtler than odors swinging censers bear,
Purer than hymns of praise or passionate prayer,
The silence like a benediction falls.
The still, slow moments softly slip along
The endless thread of thought; a holy throng
Of memories, long prisoned, find release.
The sacred sweetness of the hour has lent
These quiet faces, calm with deep content,
And one world-weary soul alike, the light of peace.

CAPRICE.

MY portals wide I set,
And garnished my abode with tender care;
I spread a dainty feast, and filled the air
With perfumes of the rose and violet.
I bade Joy weave a net,
And Mirth and Music lay a subtle snare,
To lure dear Love into my dwelling fair.
In vain! With mocking lip and scornful eye,
He passed me by!

Now all my lights are dim;
Cheerless and cold my hearth; while Pain and Care
Have banished all the joys were gathered there.
Yet Love, who came not when I beckoned him,
Still following Folly's whim,
Shivers, unwelcomed, by my hearthstone bare,
And fills with piteous pleas the wintry air.
In vain I spurn him with a frowning "No!"
He will not go!

STORM SIGNALS.

GRAY clouds flit to and fro above the sea,
Pale phantoms of wrecked ships that seek in vain
Forgotten ports. Back from the darkening main
A hundred white sails to the harbor flee,
Like frightened children to their mother's knee.
Deep calleth unto deep with cries of pain;
While the imprisoned billows strive and strain
Wildly against their rocky boundary.
The rising fog its mighty shadow flings,
Quenching the last foam-light that marks the bar;
The wild winds rave; the storm-flag from its spar
Waves a fierce menace to all living things
Save one undaunted bird, whose flickering wings
Gleam through the darkness like a falling star.

MY SERVICE.

"LIKE water to the thirsty." Oh, how sweet
The tender words I, trembling, hear thee say.
I know, dear heart, what great delight have they
Who pour for thee the wine of life, and greet
Thy coming with glad feasts, and at thy feet
All love's divinest treasures lightly lay.
I know — ah, well — for mirthful, festal day
Or love-sweet night my service is not meet.
I, standing in the shadow, wait alone
The hour, when, faint and worn and weary, thou
Shalt lean thy fevered head upon my breast,
And bid me cool with water lips and brow;
Then, if thou rise refreshed and go, nor moan
Nor murmur shall be mine; still am I wholly blest.

IN APRIL.

WHEREFORE, O violet, hast thou bloomed so soon?
And why, O bird, so early hast thou flown
From the safe circle of thy southern zone?
Why, flower, didst thou mistake for summer noon
The dawn's dim rays? And why, O bird, attune
Thy song to April's sighs? Had ye but known,
Ye might through rose-sweet days have sung and shone,
Ye might have made the glory of the June.
Alas, O bird, O bloom, O heart unwise!
Ye sought a changeless sun in changeful skies.
Your scanty share of life and love, Fate throws
With niggard hand across the melting snows.
Ye shall not greet the summer with love's eyes,
Nor hear the nightingale, nor see the rose!

THE PRAIRIE.

CONCEIVED in Nature's calmest mood, it lies,
Lovely and limitless, on earth's broad breast.
Far, far behind, beyond, with storms opprest,
The wild seas roll, and struggling mountains rise.
Here all is peace. The infinite blue of skies
And bloom of earth invites the soul to rest;
Here only sweet monotony seems blest;
Here life's horizon widens to mine eyes.
O happy plain, that woos me to forget
Awhile the seas I rode 'mid storm and stress,
The hills I climbed with passion, pain, and strife,
And all the toil and grief that waits me yet!
How dost thy gracious beauty fill and bless
These calm, clear, midland levels of my life!

MY FAMILIAR.

I CALLED him "Aspiration" when he came
And whispered softly in my willing ear:
"O foolish soul, why dost thou linger here,
O'er sordid toil that puts thy powers to shame,
That brings thee neither love nor gold nor fame?
The path to power and pleasure lieth clear;
Leave this low work to meaner hands, and aim
For loftier duties and a nobler sphere."
He took my hand, and where he bade, I went
Till youth and strength and happiness were fled;
And only when my years were nearly spent
In restless longings, and when hope was dead,
I saw the wan, sad face of him who led,
And knew at last his true name, "Discontent."

LOVE'S LARGESS.

I.

LOVE gave to me in trust a bounteous store
Of her most precious wealth, and bade me be
Her almoner, — made my eyes quick to see
The world's wide needs, the empty hearts and poor,
And filled my soul each hour more and more
With joy to do her will. Then came to me
All such as craved dear Love's sweet ministry,
And in her name I opened wide my door.
For every thirsty soul I poured my wine;
For every hungry heart I broke my bread;
I bade my fires, love-lighted, glow and shine
Along the path their weary feet must tread,
And added to each gift some joy of mine;
And these went each his own way, comforted.

II.

But when I fain had bent my lonely feet
Beside some loved one's steps a little space,
Or sought in some dear heart a resting-place,
All men cried out in anger: "'T is not meet
That thou shouldst crave our tenderness, or greet
Our eyes with smiles, who do not seek thy face.
Thy light, that lighteth many, lacketh grace;
Thy gifts, too gladly given, are not sweet.
Thou shouldst have poured into one shallow cup
The brimming measure of thy life's rare wine;
Sent from one narrow shrine thine incense up,
And seen in all the heavens but one star shine!
What is this Love that seeketh not her own?
Foolish and full of shame! Walk thou alone!"

A WINTER GIFT.

IS it a flower, indeed, this airy thing,
Sweet as the thought that sent it unto me,
And yet so frail, one soft, light kiss would be
Caress too harsh, one tear its deluge bring?
Nay, 't is a feather from a fairy's wing, —
A far, faint thought, a tender memory,
Perchance a little fluttering hope set free,
The ghost of some sweet hour of some sweet spring.
Whate'er it be, my longing heart divines
Its infinite power; across my wintry skies
It flits, and lo, the golden summer shines!
And while I gaze with wistful tear-dimmed eyes,
I see the everlasting hills arise,
I hear the voice of the eternal pines.

A BATTLE-GROUND.

THIS is the field whereon I found defeat.
Here, wounded, faint, I faltered; here I fell.
If great my cause, if feebly fought or well, —
Victor, not vanquished, shall the tale repeat.
For me, one memory alone, complete
With shame, these sobbing winds may knell;
These whispering rains one piteous story tell
To this stained sod they never may make sweet.
Yet lo, the tender earth with breast o'ertrod
By the red feet of strife, doth love to spread
A fairer verdure where her sons have bled;
And so, sad heart, from thy dishonored sod
Some flower of faith may lift its radiant head,
Purer than peace, sweet as the pity of God.

WHEN WE HAVE SAID FAREWELL.

WHEN we have said farewell, I pray you keep
No fading image of me in your heart.
Sit not a mourner in Love's house apart,
Nor bitter tears, and unavailing, weep.
Rather set all his portals wide, and sweep
And garnish his fair halls with every art;
Bring lights, bid guests; music and mirth will start
Regret's pale ghost to flight, lull pain to sleep.
For surely Love, — all bounteous, who hath cast
His glory round us, sparing not to bless
With ecstasy supreme the sweet days past, —
He who hath lavished all delights, no less
Will keep for us till time of need, his last,
Most gracious gift of all, — forgetfulness.

COMPANIONSHIP.

A BALL of clay on me my love bestows
Of her dear grace. Mere clay it seems when dry;
But when its uses in the bath I try,
With rapturing scents the water overflows.
"What wondrous art," I cry, "can thus enclose
Such wealth of perfume rare?" It doth reply:
"Nought but a lump of common earth am I,
But for a while companioned with a rose."
'T is ever thus, O Love, from thee is shed
Fragrance divine, where'er thy touch may fall.
It fills the breeze that blows about thy head,
The singing streams that ever to thee call,
The wan old earth that thrills beneath thy tread;
And this sad heart of mine, ah, most of all!

A PORTRAIT.

EYES that can pierce the secrets of the skies
And find the earliest violet. Lips that glow
With loftiest eloquence, and yet do know
With what sweet tones to still a baby's cries.
Strong hands that bear great burdens, yet despise
No love-wrought service, howsoever low.
A brain that flames with swiftest thought, yet slow
And patient lights the way for dimmer eyes.
A heart of gold, in only such degree
Alloyed with worldly wisdom as shall make
Pure metal fitter for the give and take
Of Life's rough usages. Lo, here you see
A man whom all men love to honor, while
One woman finds her heaven in his smile!

SPARROW AND SKYLARK.

FOR one sweet song the soaring skylark trills
In silvery showers through the summer air,
A thousand sparrows twitter everywhere
Their tuneless notes about our window-sills.
One is the poet's ecstasy, that thrills
The listening, longing soul with visions rare,
And one the common prose of daily care,
That all our toiling round of duty fills.
Sing on, O skylark! High and sweet and strong
Above the clouds thy raptured carols float.
How are earth's cries of pain and grief and wrong
Lulled by the music of thy wondrous throat!
Yet some sad souls, too low to heed thy song,
May still be cheered by the dull sparrow's note.

SONG OF THE STARS.

CALLETH the nearest star
Unto the farthest star:
"O thou dear light divine,
Shining so far,
Lean from thy lonely height,
Lend thou to me
One ray of all the light
That lighteth thee,
Drawn like a golden line
'Twixt thee and me."

Answereth the farthest star
Unto the nearest star:
"Love's lamps are we, that light
Her heaven afar;
Out of the infinite dark
Her touch doth fall,

Binding with lines of light
Great unto small,
Till her swift flying spark
Doth light us all."

PHILIP BOURKE MARSTON.

OUT of thy darkness what a light was poured,
Out of thy bitter cup a draught how sweet,
Poet of grief, who kissed pale Sorrow's feet,
And sang her as a lover his adored,
In such rare measures that she wears assured
A glory beyond joy! while yet each beat
Of thy great heart tolled out a life replete
With heavy, hopeless anguish, long endured.
O infinite genius, that doth win from pain
A gift of peace, wherewith to heal, to bless;
That draweth all things sweet from all things sad!
Lo, in thy presence, even death doth gain
Such gracious mien, such pitying tenderness,
That we who loved thee weep not, but are glad.

IMMORTELLES.

BENEATH the glories of a tropic sky
These fadeless flowers whitened into bloom;
They had their share of sunshine and perfume,
Their hour of joy with bee and butterfly;
They saw their kindred blossoms faint and die,
Yet felt no chill of death, no frost of doom;
The summer darkened into winter's gloom,
But left untouched their perfect purity.
Now are they wreathed in memory of one
More fair than they; whose beauty only dwells
In this sweet picture, crowned with immortelles.
They live; but she, whose bloom was scarce begun,
Lies wrapped in silence, underneath the snow,
In that sad sleep of death they cannot know.

DAWN.

WITH still, slow footsteps over hills and streams
She glides, sheathing the old moon's scimitar
And quenching, with her cold breath, star by star.
The pallid ghost of some dead day she seems,
Doomed to a sad unrest. Her wan face gleams
Through my dim room, despite of bolt or bar.
She drives my sweet companion, Sleep, afar,
Strips from my soul its shining robe of dreams,
And wraps it in the coarse, gray garb of care.
Ah, there are some, sad Dawn, who find thee fair,
To whom thou comest with smiles and greetings gay;
But I, — I murmur not, if but I may
Unhindered turn, with no new grief to bear,
Back to the unfinished toil of yesterday.

DOUBT.

I STOOD the form of my dead Doubt beside ;
I closed the piteous, yearning eyes, and set
The wan limbs straight, and smoothed the shroud,
and wet
With tears remorseful the white face ; then cried :
" O spirit restless, sad, unsatisfied,
Sleep thou in peace at last ! The endless fret
And torture of thy moods let me forget !
The pain thy presence wrought, with thee has died ;
And some fair flowers of faith perchance may bloom
The brighter that they blossom o'er thy tomb.
Farewell ! " I went my ways ; but lo, about
My heart a deadly clutch ; lo, in my ear
The old, despairing, anguished cry of fear ;
Lo, at my side, the wraith of my *dead Doubt !*

A FORSAKEN GARDEN.

THE garden of our love, with dearest care
So long encircled, desolate now, and lone;
Its storm-swept beds with alien weeds o'ergrown;
Its rose-crowned bowers, empty, bleak, and bare;
The lilies of our hopes, that pure as prayer
Sent up their incense, withered lie, and prone;
And dead those passionate tropic blooms that shone
And glowed beneath the sunbeam's kisses there.
No flower is here that it were even meet
To lay on brow or breast of any bride,
To press between dead fingers, or to bless
A quiet grave. No bloom is here, beside
This herb of memory they call "Bitter-sweet,"
And violets, frozen to forgetfulness.

THE WAVE'S DEATH.

IS it a dream of some sweet unknown land,
That thrills the trembling wave far out at sea?
What strange, wild longing draws resistlessly
The eager waters to an unknown strand?
Unhindered by the tempest's mighty hand,
From lure of sunny skies and soft winds free,
They hurry on in passionate ecstasy,
And breaking, die upon the faithless sand.
O restless soul, whose every yearning breath
Is full of vague desires and sweet, dim dreams,
Across thy far horizon glows and gleams
The dazzling land where passion beckoneth;
Yet shalt thou find, fair as the vision seems,
Like the lost wave upon the shore, but death.

EAST WIND.

O SAD East Wind, thy bitter sobs and sighs
Waken the meadows from their dream of bloom;
Thy dark wings veil the distant hills with gloom,
And dim the glories of the April skies.
Before thy frowning face the sweet Spring flies;
Thine icy blast is like the breath of doom.
Ah, is there not one heart to give thee room,
One voice to praise thee, whom all men despise,
O sad East Wind?

Yea, one! For me no sweeter zephyr dies
On beds of roses rapturous with perfume;
No voice so soft as thine, that doth assume
The thunder's tone, yet speeds in tempest guise
My darling back to Love's own paradise,
O glad East Wind!

ONE VOICE.

AMONG my native pines, the strong swift breeze
Bears me a greeting from the woods and hills,
With voice so like the ocean's roar, it fills
My heart with longing for the summer seas.
But when on shining sands I lie at ease,
While the wave's murmuring my spirit stills,
Lo ! the deep tone that all my being thrills,
Seems but an echo from my forest trees.
So, 'mid the discords of life's fret and jar,
Some radiant joy falls like a flying star,
And blending tenderly with grief or mirth,
Reveals the paradise that gave it birth.
And so, methinks, will heaven be dearer far,
Holding that one joy that was mine on earth.

A LESSON IN HORTICULTURE.

SHE turned upon me her soft, clear eyes,
Limpid as mountain brooks.
"If you wish your flowers to thrive," she said,
"You must give them loving looks."

I smiled and mused, if the whole sad world
Might be nurtured in this sweet way,
Life would be full of flowers and fruit,
And December would bloom like May.

But, ah, there are timid buds of faith
That a scornful word may chill;
And smiles of hope upon tender lips
That a frosty frown may kill;

And trembling hearts that faint and fade
In the wintry winds of blame,
And these will their sweetness only yield
When cherished in love's dear name!

So, poet-maiden, go shed your lore
O'er the wisdom of men and books;
And the desert shall blossom as the rose,
In the light of your "loving looks."

IN WINTER.

DEAR, chide me not, this is love's winter-time.
My fields you trod in bloom are white with snow;
My springs that to your song kept happy chime
Beneath their icy bonds move sad and slow.
My birds have fled into some happier clime;
My short day speeds to lingering darkness; so
You call me false and changed, and will not know
This coldness is my sorrow, not my crime.
Ah, while you love, though loved again no more,
Still shall the summer bloom within your heart;
Still from life's bright and all-abundant store
Some share of joy shall fall unto your lot.
And though you love me, and I love you not,
Remember this, — mine is the sadder part!

SORROW AND SONG.

I KNOW a lovely land, all blossoming
With summer's dearest joys: soft breezes sway
Over the sun-swept fields; each radiant day
Dawns on delight, and dying, still doth cling
To perfect night with loving lingering.
Yet doth a haunting silence dwell alway
Among the shining hills, — no tender lay
Thrills through the scented groves; no sweet birds sing.
But, oh, I do remember one lone vale
Forsaken of the sun, yet all night long
The heavenly music of the nightingale
The darkness floods with rapture deep and strong.
Ah! joy is silent; but I shall not fail
To find in sorrow's shadow some dear song.

AN OLD FAN.

WAVE it but lightly to and fro,
This lovely fan so old and rare,
And over memory's sultry air
The soft sweet winds of long ago
Shall faintly blow.

The pages of life's vanished days
Its fluttering breezes shall unfold;
And stories sweet and pictures old
Shall greet your tender, wistful gaze
While this fan plays.

What fate has spared a thing so frail,
From Time's rude touch or careless whim?
Yet has it seen bright eyes grow dim,
And rosy cheeks grow cold and pale,
And strong hands fail.

'T is like a flickering sunbeam's ray ;
'T is like a bird whose flying wing
A message from far lands doth bring ;
'T is like a beckoning hand, whose sway
Calls us away.

Still may its wavering to and fro
Bring happy visions to your mind ;
And may no ruder, harsher wind
Than this old fan hath power to blow,
Your life e'er know !

A FLOOD.

ON weary wings the dove of my desire,
Fainting and fluttering from her hopeless quest,
Droops back into my heart, her lonely nest.
A passionate deluge, strong and swift as fire
O'erwhelms my soul, and rising ever higher,
Leaves me still drifting helpless, east or west,
Listening for that one voice, whose great behest
Alone can bid the wasting waves retire.
Ah, yearning heart! I know there is for thee
No vision of the sweet green earth, no shade
Of fragrant flower-clad hills or sheltering tree,
No refuge from the ruin life has made.
But yet fly forth once more, O faithful dove;
Haply thou 'lt bring at last one olive-leaf of love.

AN ENIGMA.

IT is as trifling as the idle summer wind;
It is as mighty as the sea's resistless wave;
A breath may break it, or a touch may bind;
Dying each hour, it lives beyond the grave.

It is the pastime of a careless holiday;
It is the guerdon of a lifelong toil and strife;
One shall obtain it but to fling away;
One shall not gain it though he gives his life.

It may be purchased with a wanton's lightest kiss,
Or bought with honor, blood, and gold untold;
The veriest vagabond may spurn the bliss
A king enthroned would yield his realms to hold.

It has been many a martyr's glorious crown,
And many an honored teacher's robe of shame;
Whoso upon its shrine lays all things down,
Perchance the world may praise, perchance may blame.

All crimes, all benefits, are scattered from its hand;
On every tower its banners are unfurled;
Nations shed their best blood at its command,
And with its lightest touch it sways the world.

AFTER-POSSESSION.

OF all Fate's crosses, saddest this to bear
And surest, — we shall seek some good denied,
On every land and sea, afar and wide;
Seek it by day with toil, by night with prayer,
And all in vain. But when desire has died,
Behold the joy erewhile we deemed so fair
Lies at our feet. Lo, we have ceased to care,
And lightly spurn the bliss for which we sighed!
So comes to withered harvest-fields the rain;
So to unshriven dead the sacred wine;
And so, O heart that will not be estranged
From thy desire most dear, — and ah, most vain, —
One day the love thou cravest shall be thine,
But only when thou 'rt still in death — or changed.

A FANCY.

IF every kiss I give my love
Should blush on her lips to a red, red rose;
What a bower of bloom,
What an air of perfume,
Would encircle my darling wherever she goes,
My darling, more sweet than the sweetest red rose!

If every kiss I give my love
Should fly from her lips as a bright wood-bird;
What a fluttering throng,
What a chorus of song,
Would make melody rarer than ears ever heard,
Round my darling, more fair than the fairest spring bird!

If every kiss I give my love
Should fall from her lips as a jewel of gold,
What a fabulous dower,
What a glittering shower,
Would float round my darling like Danaë of old, —
My darling, whose bright hair is brighter than gold!

Oh, what is more sweet than a red, red rose?
And what is more fair than the breast of a dove?
And plenty of gold
Is good to hold;
But sweeter and fairer, and far, far above
All other delights, is one kiss from my love.

THE LIGHTED WAY.

ONE dying said, "It is not far to go,
And all the way with love is lighted clear."
O sweetest soul, whose heaven lay so near
That all thy life was lighted from its glow,
For thee and for us all God meant it so;
That His most perfect love should cast out fear,
That we should find His heaven even here, —
Amid our daily toils, — could we but know.
Even as little children at their play,
For safety learn to keep in sight of home,
So, if our restless footsteps never stray
Far from the lights of heaven, not in dismay
Shall we at last to death's dread portals come,
But joyful, led by Thee, — the Light, the Way.

AN ASPIRATION.

I SAW the sparrows flitting here and there
In quest of food about the miry street;
Such nameless fare as seems to sparrows sweet,
They sought with greedy clamor everywhere;
Yet 'mid their strife I noted with what care
They held upraised their fluttering pinions fleet;
They trod the mire with soiled and grimy feet,
But kept their wings unsullied in the air.
I too, like thee, O sparrow, toil to gain
My scanty portion from life's sordid ways;
Like thee, too often hungry, I am fain
To strive with greed and envy all my days.
Oh, would that I, like thee, might learn the grace
To keep my soul's uplifted wings from stain!

MY PART.

THAT God hath need of even me, I know.
Afar He plans His palaces, that rise
In stately splendor to the shining skies,
And day by day, more grand, more perfect grow;
While I, in life's dark quarries, toiling slow,
Hew the unshapely stones, that yet no guise
Of beauty wear to my dim, weary eyes,
'Neath my rude touch no grace or glory show.
Elsewhere shall hands more skilful carve and gild
My rough-hewn blocks, till they are meet to be
A part of those bright walls that He doth build.
Therefore, O soul, be all thy murmurs stilled;
A place to work for Him he giveth thee,
And to thy poor toil, immortality.

A LESSON OF LOVE.

'TIS a sweet story, old, and often told,
Of Jesus when a child.
Once, on a summer noon, beside the way
He sat, and thus beguiled
A lonely hour. With fingers swift, He rolled
And deftly fashioned from the wayside clay,
The forms of little birds, —
The likeness of the sparrow that is sold
For smallest coin ; the lark
Whose distant wing gleamed like a golden spark ;
The swallow darting swiftly to its prey.

The sound of angry words
Shattered the silence sweet. A Rabbi stood
And sternly gave rebuke : "Go, idle boy,
And seek forgiveness for thy wanton mood.
God's law thou dost profane ;
And holy Sabbath vainly thus employ,
Shaping thy worthless toy."

Jesus looked up and smiled.
He spoke no word, but gathered up again
The little birds, wherewith He had beguiled
The heart too young for care;
Breathed once upon them, tossed them in the air, —
And, lo! a rush of wings, a burst of song,
A living, shining throng!

Dear Lord, with feeble hands and lifeless clay,
All our poor deeds are wrought.
We fain would give them wings that they might fly;
Yet, soulless, dead, they lie
Scattered beside life's way.
Breathe Thou, O Lord, one breath upon them, fraught
With Thy dear love, and they shall soar and sing,
Thy glory shining on each radiant wing.

"FROM LIFE'S LEVELS."

AT most, how small a part of earth's fair face
Doth jealous Nature yield unto our sight!
She draws the horizon like a veil of light
Across our view, and sets with scanty grace
Her narrow bounds. Yet upturned eyes may trace,
Through endless vistas shining clear and bright,
Innumerable worlds in ceaseless flight,
And, unforbidden, scan eternal space.
Even so life's limits, set by chance and change,
Bar from our sight the things that are to be.
Our nearest future shadowed seems and strange;
Yet sometimes, through the darkness, we may see,
Above our dim horizon's narrow range,
Some clear, sweet vision of eternity!

OUR DAILY BREAD.

"GIVE us this day our daily bread."
This was the simple prayer we said
In childhood, at the mother's knee.
Like birds that clamor to be fed,
In their soft nests, no doubt or dread
For all to-morrow's needs had we.

Now to our hearts, with care o'ergrown,
A deep and thrilling undertone
Rings clear through all that Jesus said.
The sweet old words we used to speak,
Still hold whatever good we seek, —
"Give us this day our daily bread."

The daily bread of Patience. This
May be our portion still, who miss
The feasts of life. Though it be meant
That we should walk through barren lands,
With longing hearts and empty hands,
This humble crust may yet content.

The daily bread of Faith. For though
Unto our lips a draught of woe
Must oft be pressed, howe'er we pray,
E'en while we drink, at God's command,
This crumb that falleth from His hand
Shall take the bitter taste away.

The daily bread of Love. Though we,
Like princes, banquet royally
On richest viands, 'mid the flow
Of rarest wines, yet have not love, —
How poor the priceless feast shall prove,
When, starving still, we rise and go!

O Thou, who never yet hath ceased
To shed Thy bounty o'er the least
Of all Thy creatures, far and wide,
Give us this day our daily bread.
So shall we with Thy love be fed,
And in Thy fulness, satisfied.

GOD'S OWN.

'TIS thus they name her, "poor and old and lonely,
Awkward and plain of face;"
But, ah, if young and rich and fair had only
One half her wealth and grace!

Nothing is hers by any claim or title,
By grant from State or throne;
Yet hath she all things, by the sweet requital
God giveth to His own.

Homeless, some straying gleams from shining portals
Make all her pathway bright!
On crumbs that fall from feasts of happier mortals
She banquets with delight.

Unwedded, from love's flowers that fade beside her
She plants a paradise;
Childless, she finds the motherhood denied her
In every baby's eyes.

Unlearned, she hath such store of sweetest knowledge,
Such wisdom to impart!
The lore that is not taught in school or college, —
The way to every heart;

The bright side of each soul, however hidden
By sorrow, sin, or doubt;
The prisoned good, all life and light forbidden,
That only love finds out.

Ah, love it is that fills her life with plenty,
Riches that grow and stay!
This her wealth's secret, though her hands are empty,
Her heart is full alway.

So though you deem her poor and old and lowly,
Of little fame or worth,
One named her blessed among the meek and holy
That shall inherit earth.

HELL GATE.

LO, where deep sunken reefs of passion hide
Beneath the troubled waters of my life!
Sharper than poisoned dart or keenest knife,
They rend and wreck my ships. Upon the tide,
Red as with blood, my fairest hopes have died.
My golden freights, forsaken in the strife,
Unheeded lie, and every wave is rife
With ruin, wrought by hate and doubt and pride.
God saw my need, and knew the remedy,
The mighty grief that could my heart control.
His touch electric softly, tenderly,
Upon my quivering heart in pity stole.
One great convulsion! Then the waves swept free
Along the deepened channel of my soul.

A LOST SPRING.

ALL the long months, while earth was growing bright
With Spring's enchanting light,
I was a prisoner in the house of pain
With dulled and fevered brain.
Dark were the days and drear;
I had no token that the Spring was here,
Save that, day after day,
Beside my pillow a dear hand would lay
The blossom of the hour.
First, a gold Crocus flower,
And then the pensive snowdrop's fragile cup,
Then violets, with their sweet lips lifted up
To kiss my pallid face.
All these, unheeded, lavished love and grace,
And spent their odorous breath
To lure me back from death.

At last, from suffering's dreariest abyss,
I turned to clasp and kiss
A spray of apple bloom ;
And when the first rose poured out its perfume,
Pain loosed my bonds, and opened wide my door,
And I was free once more.
The Summer all her glories o'er me shed ;
I lived, but, oh, the lovely Spring was dead !
Now, as a mother who has been bereft,
Turns from her darlings left,
And cries, while yet she loves them all the more,
" He was the sweetest child I ever bore,"
So I, though April's smile
And many Mays my lingering steps beguile,
  Still count the bitter cost
Of that bright season, clouded with despair,
And deem no other can be half so fair
  As that sweet Spring I lost !

A WINTER ROSE.

O WINTER Rose, by what enchanting power
Was wrought thy shining miracle of bloom?
Who hid for thee the golden glowing hour
That turns to summer this December gloom?

What thrilling impulse, like a secret fire,
Melted the snows wherein thy heart doth hide?
What tender memory, what dear desire
For the fond Sun, thy lover long denied?

Haply the June forgot thee when she cast
Her wealth of riotous bloom o'er hill and field;
Now the poor, beggared earth doth hold thee fast,
Like the last gold a spendthrift's purse may yield.

O sweet, wise flower! Thine is a happier doom,
Though frosts may blight, than summer blossom knows.
Better be one rose in a world of gloom
Than, 'midst a million roses, but one rose.

O heart, so near love's winter-time, take heed !
Spend thou not all thy wealth at summer noon ;
Keep thou one last, fair flower till time of need,
To turn thy drear December into June.

LOVE'S PRESENCE.

AT the hearth where Love doth sit,—
Though but scanty fires are lit,
Though the freezing winter wind
Everywhere may entrance find,—
There doth gather sweet content,
Hope and peace and merriment.
Throngeth music, mirth, and wit
At the hearth where Love doth sit.

At the board where Love doth wait,—
Though the beggar at the gate
Scorns the meagre crust we share,
Find we ever sweetest fare,
All things good for every need;
Penance days nor fasts we heed.
Banquet we in royal state
At the board where Love doth wait.

On the couch where Love doth lie
Ne'er is heard the restless sigh.
  Though but coarse and hard the bed,
  Softly falls the weary head.
Lingering kisses, lightly pressed,
Seal the drooping lids to rest;
  Blissful dreams with bright wings fly
  Round the couch where Love doth lie.

In the heart where Love doth dwell,
Palace, cot, or prison cell,
  Every care with joy doth blend,
  Toil is welcomed as a friend,
Sorrow's face a smile doth wear,
Death the name of Peace doth bear.
  Grief may come, but all is well
  In the heart where Love doth dwell.

MY FRIEND.

SHE is not beautiful, nor deeply wise;
She owns no trick of tongue, no lure of eyes;
But there is nought of loveliness or grace
But finds a mirror in her tender face.

In her pure presence all of good and true
In word or deed, she seems to draw from you,
And never dreams that the fine gold of thought
Is all her own, in other's language wrought.

Should life's long path grow dark unto your sight,
Follow her footsteps, for she walks in light;
And all her acts unconscious lessons teach,
Bright with sweet thoughts that blossom into speech.

I may not liken her unto a flower,
That charms all eyes, — and withers in an hour;
I may not liken her unto a star, —
Though it shines ever, yet it shines too far;

But I have seen, and seeing, thought of her,
Some forest fountain flow so faint and clear,
It would be all unheeded, save that there
The grass is greener, and the flowers more fair.

THE FRINGED GENTIAN.

IN thee, bright mirror of the autumn skies,
Is heaven's dear blue betrayed to downcast eyes.
Earth wears thee as a queen her sapphire crown,
When, royal still, she lays her sceptre down.
Nature's last gift thou art. How fair, how dear!
Dropped from the chill hand of the fading year.

The sun, belovèd of the passionate rose,
Sought all in vain to break thy calm repose;
The soft south winds caressed thee; and the showers
Wooed thee with tears to join the world of flowers;
Vainly did Summer all her glories give;
Only the frost's first touch could make thee live.

Ah, there are lives that never bloom aright
While e'er the sun of happiness shines bright.
No summer joy fulfils their highest need,
Nor shows the way life's deeper meanings lead.
Only at Sorrow's touch their souls unfold,
Revealing all the sweetness that they hold.

FROM THE PHONOGRAPH.

LISTEN! It is the voice whereon death laid
Long since the seal that made its music mute.
Now doth it thrill like an imprisoned lute
From this strange instrument that man hath made.
His voice! The first of all his powers to fade,
As fades a flower with life still at its root,
His most ethereal, fleeting attribute,
That fled while yet his fluttering spirit stayed.
His voice! It fills with glory the abyss
Of empty years! O doubters, in the face
Of such a joy, be still! Surely the grace
Of this delight foretastes the ultimate bliss;
Surely these arms shall meet the old embrace,
These eyes shall know his face, these lips his kiss!

QUATRAINS.

I WINGED my love for heaven; yet hath it flown
No higher than its nest, this heart of thine.
But love is love; and God will find His own
Whether it dwell with human or divine.

Sad the young heart that, cold and hopeless, lies
Under the embers of its dead desires.
Sadder the old, that sternly, vainly tries
To hide 'neath ashes its untimely fires.

Scorn not the small song-blossoms of the hour,
Whose fragile petals strew the winds of time.
Some distant age may joy to see them flower
Upon our crumbling Parthenons of rhyme.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
0 016 225 833 3